بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

TA'WIL OF AL-KURSI TO MEAN ILM (KNOWLEDGE) ACCORDING TO SOME FROM THE SALAF:

A REPLY TO FAISAL AL-JASIM

Praise be to Allah that is due from all grateful believers, a fullness of praise for all his favours: a praise that is abundantly sincere and blessed. May the blessings of Allah be upon our beloved Master Muhammad, the chosen one, the Apostle of mercy and the seal of all Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all); and upon his descendants who are upright and pure: a blessing lasting to the Day of Judgment, like the blessing bestowed upon the Prophet Ibrahim (alaihis salam) and his descendants. May Allah be pleased with all of the Prophetic Companions (Ashab al-Kiram). Indeed, Allah is most worthy of praise and supreme glorification!

In his reply to the work known as "Ahlus Sunna al-Asha'ira – Shahada Ulama-il-Umma- wa adillatuhum" ["The Ashari's are The People of the Sunna – The Testimony of the Scholars of the Umma and their Evidences] by Hamad al-Sinan and Fawzi al-Anjari, with commendation from some ten contemporary Shuyukh; Faisal al-Jasim said in his "Asha'ira fi Mizan Ahlus Sunna" (abridged into English by Abdul Haqq al-Ashanti, and disseminated for free distribution under the title: "The Ash'ari's In The Scales of Ahlus Sunnah"), it mentioned on p. 93 the following in refutation of the Ta'wil (figurative interpretation) of al-Kursi to mean Allah's Knowledge:

First: the claim that Ibn 'Abbas (radi Allahu 'anhu) made ta'weel of al-Kursi

Based on what was reported by at-Tabari via Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas *(radi Allahu 'anhu)* that he said about the verse,

وسع كرسيه

"His Kursi extends over..." {*al-Baqarah (2): 255*}

"His Kursi: means His Knowledge."

This is not authentically reported from Ibn 'Abbas *(radi Allahu 'anhu)* for the following reasons:

Firstly: Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah is weak and al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar summarised the ruling on him with saying **"Sudooq (truthful), but makes mistakes"** and the likes of this are unacceptable to take sole narrations from according to the Muhadditheen. This is especially the case in regards to those who report much from Sa'eed bin Jubayr. For if such a narrator adds something which opposes the *thiqat* who reported much from the companions of Sa'eed bin Jubayr then there is no doubt that the specific ruling on such a narrator is that he has erred and reported something shadh, as is the case here. An explanation of this will follow:

Reply:

Al-Jasim mentioned that the above narration which he weakened was recorded by al-Tabari (in his Tafsir), but what he did not mention is the point that al-Tabari himself appears to have given preference to the view that al-Kursi can mean Allah's Ilm (see below where he said that the Origin [Asl] of al-Kursi is Ilm). This despite the fact that al-Jasim was sure that al-Tabari had the genuine 'Salafi' creed (as found on p. 126 onwards of the English edition compiled by al-Ashanti)!

Imam al-Tabari (d. 310 AH) gave a few narrations on the Tafsir (exegesis) of the above verse and the point below is what alludes to al-Tabari's preference on this issue:

وأما الذي يدل علـــى صحته ظاهر القرآن فقول ابن عبـــاس الذي رواه جعفر بن أبـــي الـــمغيرة عن سعيد بن جبـــير عنه أنه قال: هو علـــمه, وذلك لدلالة قوله تعالـــى ذكره: {وَلاَ يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُما} علـــى أن ذلك كذلك, فأخبر أنه لا يؤوده حِفظ ما علـــم, وأحاط به مـــما فـــي السموات والأرض, وكما أخبر عن ملائكته أنهم قالوا فـــي دعائهم: {رَبّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْـــما} فأخبر تعالـــى ذكره أن علـــمه وسع كل شيء, فكذلك قوله: {وَسِعَ كُرْسِيّهُ السّمَوَاتِ وَالأرْضَ}. وأصل الكرسي: العلـــم

The portions in green are al-Tabari's wording which translates as:

"The outward wording of the Qur'an indicates the correctness of the saying of Ibn Abbas that is related by Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr from him (Ibn Abbas), that he said: 'It is His Ilm' (His knowledge)."

The last line also in green mentioned al-Tabari saying:

"And the Asl (original sense) of al-Kursi is al-Ilm."

What al-Jasim and those he was refuting didn't seem to have known to mention is that in the most authentic book of Hadith on the face of the Earth, known as **Sahih al-Bukhari**, it has also mentioned a report from Ibn Abbas' (radiallahu anhu) disciple known as Sa'eed ibn Jubayr (ra) which affirms that al-Kursi can mean Allah's Ilm.

Indeed, the mass circulated English translation of Sahih al-Bukhari by Muhsin Khan has with deliberate intent left this passage untranslated from Ibn Jubayr! It may be that Muhsin Khan who is from the same sect as al-Jasim and al-Ashanti did not want the non-Arabic readers to know this, for it may be at odds with his school of creed. More so, al-Ashanti, who denied the claims that his sect never tampered with classical texts needs to inform his readers why one from his sect left this out, and why al-Jasim missed this narration from Sahih al-Bukhari as well.

The investigative reader may look at this incomplete English edition, specifically, volume 6, page 44, chapter 44, and on the bottom right hand side (last line) one may clearly see that the Arabic text mentioned:

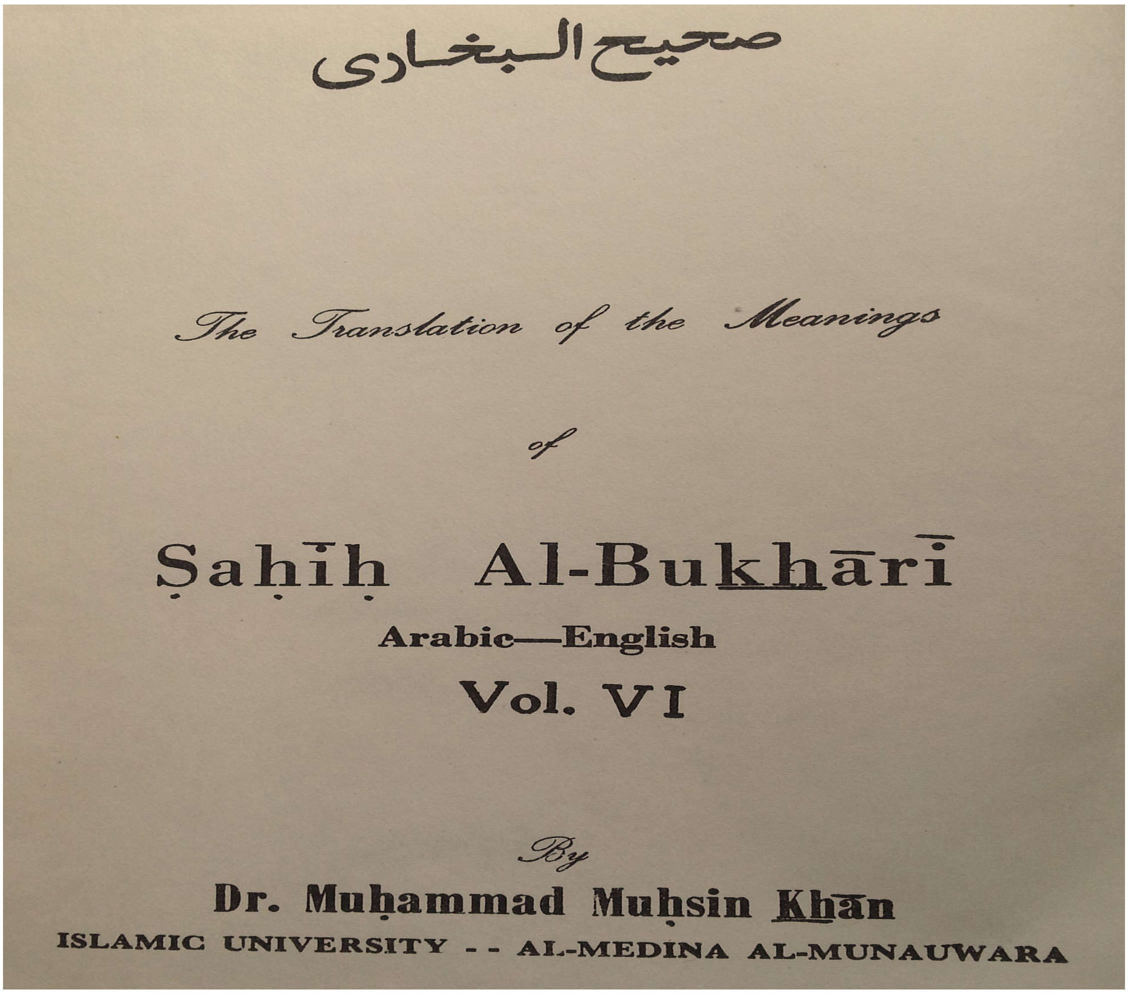
وقال ابن جبير:

كرسيه علمه

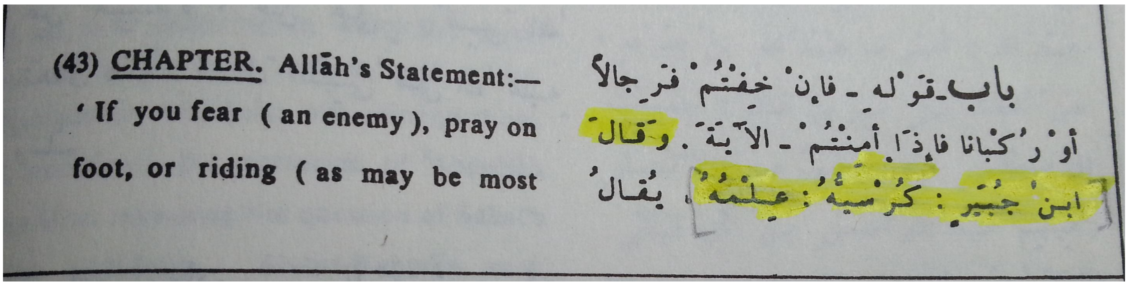
Meaning: **Ibn Jubayr said: 'His Kursi is His Knowledge.'**

Digital images of the above decisive point from the named edition of Sahih al-Bukhari:

Front cover of the work at hand from an early print (undated):



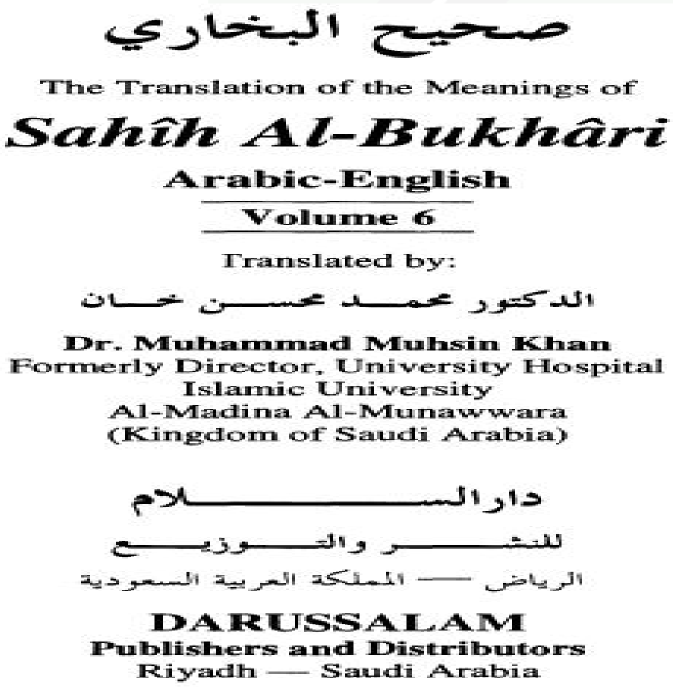
Actual page (6/44) with Ibn Jubayr's interpretation with missing English translation:



(43) CHAPTER. Allāh's Statement:— ' If you fear (an enemy), pray on foot, or riding (as may be most

باب قوله - فإن خفتم فرجالا أو ركبانا فإذا أمنتم - الآية. وقال ابن جبير: كرسيه: علمه، يقال

The same edition by Muhsin Khan was republished by Darus Salam publishers in July 1997 as the following images show:



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Sahîh Al-Bukhâri

Arabic-English

Volume 6

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Once again this edition (6/56, chapter 44) has also not shown the translation of the words of Sa'eed ibn Jubayr! Digital image showing this omission in the English translation:

(43) CHAPTER. "...And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the *Ṣalât* (prayers)]."[1] (V.2:238)

4534. Narrated Zaid bin Arqam: We used to speak while in *Ṣalât* (prayer). One of us used to speak to his brother (while in *Ṣalât*) about his need, till the Verse was revealed:

"Guard strictly the (five obligatory) *As-Salawât* (the prayers), especially the middle *Ṣalât* (i.e., the best – *'Aṣr*). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and not speak to others during the *Ṣalât* (prayers)]." (V.2:238)

Then we were ordered not to speak in the *Ṣalât*.

(٤٣) **بابٌ**: ﴿وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَٰنِتِينَ﴾ [٢٣٨] أي مُطِيعِينَ

٤٥٣٤ – حدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ: حدَّثَنا يَحْيَى، عَنْ إسْماعِيلَ بنِ أبي خالِدٍ، عَنِ الحارِثِ ابنِ شُبَيْلٍ، عَنْ أبي عَمْرٍو الشَّيْبانِيِّ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بنِ أرْقَمَ قالَ: كُنَّا نَتَكَلَّمُ في الصَّلاةِ، يُكَلِّمُ أحَدُنا أخاهُ في حاجَتِهِ حتَّى نَزَلَتْ هٰذِهِ الآيَةُ ﴿حَٰفِظُوا عَلَى ٱلصَّلَوَٰتِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ٱلْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَٰنِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾﴾ فأُمِرْنا بالسُّكُوتِ.

[راجع: ١٢٠٠]

(44) CHAPTER. Allâh's Statement: "If you fear (an enemy), perform *Ṣalât* (prayer) on foot or riding. And when you are in safety..." (V.2:239)

(٤٤) **بابُ** قَوْلِهِ: ﴿فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنتُمْ﴾ [٢٣٩] الآيَةَ.

وَقالَ ابنُ جُبَيرٍ: ﴿كُرْسِيُّهُ﴾ [٢٥٥]: عِلْمُهُ، يُقالُ: ﴿بَسْطَةً﴾ [٢٤٧]: زِيادَةً وَفَضلاً. ﴿أَفْرِغْ﴾ [٢٥٠]: أنْزِلْ. ﴿وَلَا يَـُٔودُهُۥ﴾ [٢٥٥]: لا يُثْقِلُهُ، آدَنِي: أثْقَلَني، والآدُ والأيْدُ: القُوَّةُ. السِّنَةُ: النُّعاسُ، ﴿لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ﴾ [٢٥٩]: لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ. ﴿فَبُهِتَ﴾ [٢٥٨]: ذَهَبَتْ حُجَّتُهُ. ﴿خَاوِيَةٌ﴾ [٢٥٩]: لا أنِيسَ فِيها. ﴿عُرُوشِهَا﴾: أبْنِيَتُها. ﴿نُنشِزُهَا﴾ [٢٥٩]: نُخْرِجُها. ﴿إِعْصَارٌ﴾ [٢٦٦]: رِيحٌ عاصِفٌ تَهُبُّ مِنَ الأرْضِ إلى السَّماءِ كَعَمودٍ فيهِ نارٌ.

وَقالَ ابنُ عَبَّاسٍ: ﴿صَلْدًا﴾ [٢٦٤]:

(1) (Ch. 42) See *Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalât* in the glossary.

Now, Imam al-Bukhari mentioned this from Ibn Jubayr without mentioning his chain of transmission back to him, and this is known as a Mu'allaq (suspended) narration. The Hadith expert known as al-Hafiz Abu Amr ibn al Salah (d. 643 AH) mentioned the following with respect to the acceptance of this type of narration in Sahih al-Bukhari in his famous Muqaddima (see the English edition translated under the title of *"An Introduction to the Science of Hadith",* p. 13):

"There is doubt about some of the 'suspended' hadith ('mu'allaq'); that is, the hadith with an isnâd from the beginning of which one transmitter or more is omitted. The majority of these are in the book of Bukhari; there are very few in the book of Muslim. We should say: These and similar hadith which contain an expression decisively and conclusively indicating their ascription to the person from whom they are 'suspended' – for example, 'The Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) said ***(qala)*** *such and such,' 'Ibn Abbas said such and such,' 'Mujahid said such and such,' 'Affan said such and such,' 'Qa'nabi said such and such,' 'Abu Hurayra related (rawa) such and such,' and similar expressions – are judged to be established as actually coming from that person. On the basis of all of these expressions, it is determined that the person to whom Bukhari ascribed the hadith spoke and related [the text that follows]. Bukhari would not have deemed it permissible to state this [that is, to use these unequivocal expressions] without qualification unless it was established in his view that the hadith came from the person to whom it was ascribed. If the transmitter from whom the hadith is suspended is not a Companion, the judgement regarding the soundness of the hadith depends on the cohesiveness of the isnâd between that person and the Companion."*

Hence, since Imam al-Bukhari used the expression "wa qala Ibn Jubayr" (and Ibn Jubayr said) in a definitive manner, then it would lead to the conclusion that Imam al-Bukhari was sure that such a report from Ibn Jubayr was authentically

related from him, and that there was no hidden defect (illa) in the chain (sanad) back to Ibn Jubayr or its actual wording (matn).

Now, this leads onto locating the precise chains of transmission (asanid) back to Ibn Jubayr and his Shaykh, Ibn Abbas (radiallahu anhu). Indeed, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH), who was the foremost authority in Hadith in his day has commented on this very narration ascribed by al-Bukhari to Ibn Jubayr in his famous commentary to Sahih al-Bukhari, known as *Fath al-Bari*. In this day and age, it is usually the claimants to the Way of al-Salaf who have some major creedal problems with some of what al-Hafiz mentioned in this commentary.

Al-Hafiz mentioned the following in his Fath al-Bari (8/199):

قوله وقال بن جبير كرسيه علمه وصله سفيان الثوري في تفسيره في رواية أبي حذيفة عنه بإسناد صحيح أخرجه عبد بن حميد وابن أبي حاتم من وجه آخر عن سعيد بن جبير فزاد فيه عن بن عباس وأخرجه العقيلي من وجه آخر عن سعيد بن جبير عن بن عباس عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو عند الطبراني في كتاب السنة من هذا الوجه مرفوعا وكذا رويناه في فوائد أبي الحسن علي بن عمر الحربي مرفوعا والموقوف أشبه وقال العقيلي إن رفعه خطأ ثم هذا التفسير غريب وقد روى بن أبي حاتم من وجه آخر عن بن عباس أن الكرسي موضع القدمين وروى بن المنذر بإسناد صحيح عن أبي موسى مثله وأخرجا عن السدي أن الكرسي بين يدي العرش وليس ذلك مغايرا لما قبله والله أعلم

The above quote mentions that the narration from Ibn Jubayr is also found in the *Tafsir* (p. 71, 125:45) of Imam Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH) with a Sahih isnâd (an authentic chain of transmission), as well as being related by Abd ibn Humayd, while Ibn Abi Hatim (in his *Tafsir*, no. 2599) related it from Ibn Jubayr who reported it from Ibn Abbas, while al-Uqayli related it with a route going back to Ibn Jubayr from Ibn Abbas reporting it as a hadith of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). This being also found in al-Tabarani's *Kitab al-Sunna* as a Prophetic Hadith, as well as in the *Fawa'id* of Abul Hasan Ali ibn Umar al-Harbi as both going back to Ibn Abbas (mawquf form) and as a Prophetic hadith (Marfu form). Al-Uqayli objected to it being raised back in the marfu form. Ibn Hajar also mentioned the alternative version back to Ibn Abbas (ra) stating al-Kursi to be the place of the "two feet". In this short reply, our objective is not to dismiss outright the latter version from Ibn Abbas (ra), but to show that some from the Salaf did allow Ta'wil of the Kursi. See the last page of this article for more on the "two feet" version.

What can be gathered is that Ibn Hajar has authenticated the narration from Ibn Jubayr which he mentioned to be found in the Tafsir of al-Thawri. This variant is indeed found in the presently printed edition of this Tafsir (p. 71, Darul Kutub Ilmiyya edition) as follows:

سفين عن جعفر عن سعيد بن جبير في قوله جل وعز { وسع كرسيه السماوات والأرض } قال علمه

Indeed, al-Hafiz also mentioned more about the routes for Ibn Jubayr's narration in his *Taghliq al-Ta'liq* (4/85-86) as follows:

وقال ابن جبير كرسيه علمه أخبرنا بذلك عبدالقادر بن محمد بن علي أنا أحمد ح بن علي بن الحسن الجزري أنا محمد بن إسماعيل خطيب مردا أنا علي بن حمزة الكاتب أنا أبو القاسم بن الحصين أنا أبو طالب بن غيلان أنا أبو بكر الشافعي ثنا إسحاق بن الحسن ثنا أبو حذيفة ثنا سفيان عن جعفر عن سعيد بن جبير في قوله البقرة وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض قال علمه وقد روي عن جعفر عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس أخبرنا أبو بكر بن إبراهيم بن العز أنا أحمد بن أبي طالب أن محمد بن محمد ابن السباك كتب إليهم أنا أبو الفتح بن البطي أنا أحمد بن علي أنا أبو القاسم الطبراني أنا علي بن عمر بن إبراهيم ثنا أحمد بن محمد الجوزي ثنا الحسن بن مكرم ثنا يحيى بن حماد ثنا أبو عوانة عن مطرف عن جعفر أبي المغيرة عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس قال وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض قال علمه وأنبأنا به عاليا أبو الحسن بن أبي المجد شفاها عن سليمان بن حمزة أن محمود ابن إبراهيم العبدي كتب إليهم عن الحسن بن العباس الإصبهاني أنا أبو بكر السمسار أنا إبراهيم بن خرشيذ قوله ثنا الحسين بن إسماعيل ثنا يعقوب بن

إبراهيم ثنا عبدالرحمن ثنا سفيان عن مطرف به وبه إلى يعقوب ثنا هشيم وعبدالله بن إدريس فرقهما كلاهما عن مطرف به رواه عبد بن حميد عن عمرو بن عون عن هشيم فوقع لنا بدلا عاليا ورواه العقيلي في ترجمة شجاع بن مخلد أحد الثقات من رواية شجاع عن أبي عاصم عن سفيان الثوري مرفوعا وقال إنه أخطأ في رفعه ورواه أحمد بن منصور الرمادي وأبو مسلم الكجي عن أبي عاصم مرفوعا وكذا رواه ابن مهدي ووكيع عن سفيان قوله فيه

What is noticeable is that al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar did not weaken these narrations going back to Sa'eed ibn Jubayr or Ibn Abbas (ra) in his *Fath al-Bari* or *Taghliq al-Ta'liq*. Nor did he declare that there was any hidden defect in the variants mentioning the Ta'wil back to Ibn Jubayr or Ibn Abbas (ra). It is not proven with an authentic chain of transmission (sanad) that Ibn Abbas (ra) heard this Ta'wil directly from the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), nevertheless, he

would have most probably heard it from the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) before presenting it to his student, ibn Jubayr.

All of the known routes which mention al-Kursi to mean al-Ilm run via the common narrator, Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira.

As for al-Jasim's claim:

Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah is weak and al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar summarised the ruling on him with saying **"Sudooq (truthful), but makes mistakes"** and the likes of this are unacceptable to take sole narrations from according to the Muhadditheen. This is especially the case in regards to those who report much from Sa'eed bin Jubayr. For if such a narrator adds something which opposes the *thiqat* who reported much from the companions of Sa'eed bin Jubayr then there is no doubt that the specific ruling on such a narrator is that he has erred and reported something shadh, as is the case here. An explanation of this will follow:

Then, this is from his personal deduction and a misconstruction of the actual position of al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar on Ja'far's narration from Ibn Jubayr on the Kursi. Indeed, al-Hafiz did say in his *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (no. 960) that Ja'far is Saduq Yahim ("Truthful with mistakes"). This was deduced in summary of what is recorded in his Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (vol. 2) where he mentioned the following on Ja'far:

[165] بخ د ت س فق البخاري في الأدب المفرد وأبي داود والترمذي والنسائي وابن ماجة في التفسير جعفر بن أبي المغيرة الخزاعي القمي روى عن سعيد بن جبير وعكرمة وشهر بن حوشب وأبي الزناد وسعيد بن عبد الرحمن بن أبزى وغيرهم وعنه ابنه الخطاب وحسان بن علي العنزي ومطرف بن طريف ويعقوب بن عبد الله القمي

الأشعري وعدة قال أبو الشيخ رأى بن الزبير ودخل مكة أيام بن عمر مع سعيد بن جبير قلت وقع حديثه في صحيح البخاري ضمنا حيث قال في التيمم وأمنا بن عباس وهو متيمم وهذا من رواية يحيى بن يحيى التميمي عن جرير عن أشعث عن جعفر عن سعيد بن جبير وقد أشرت إليه في ترجمة أشعث أيضا وذكره بن حبان في الثقات ونقل ونقل بن حبان في الثقات عن أحمد بن حنبل توثيقه وقال بن مندة ليس بالقوي في سعيد بن جبير وقال أبو نعيم الأصبهاني اسم أبي المغيرة دينار

From the above it may be deduced that those who deemed Ja'far to be trustworthy (Thiqa) include:

Ibn Hibban (d. 354 AH), since he listed him in his Thiqat (6/134). Ibn Hajar claimed that Ibn Hibban also related authentication (tawthiq) from Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH), but this seems to be an error on his part, since Ibn Hibban did not relate this from Ibn Hanbal. Rather, it was Ibn Shahin (d. 385 AH) who listed Ja'far in his Thiqat (book listing trustworthy narrators) with mention that this was also Ibn Hanbal's saying as follows:

[167] جعفر بن أبي المغيرة القمي ثقة قاله أحمد

This tawthiq is confirmed from Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal since his son Abdullah reported this tawthiq from him in his I'lal (no. 4393) as follows:

قال عبد الله بن أحمد : سمعت أبي يقول : جعفر بن أبي المغيرة القمي , وهو جعفر المصور , ثقة ، وهو جعفر بن دينار.

The only person that Ibn Hajar knew who had attempted to discredit Ja'far was Abu Abdullah Ibn Manda (b. 310 AH – d. 395 AH) who is on record as saying that Ja'far was Laysa bil Qawi (Not that strong).

Ibn Hajar did not mention that one of the foremost Imams of al-Jarh wa Ta'dil in his age known as Imam Yahya ibn Ma'een (d. 233 AH) had also made tawthiq on Ja'far by stating there is no harm with him ليس به بَأسٌ- . This is found in the Ma'rifatur Rijal (1/436) of Ibn Ma'een as transmitted by his student, Ibn Muhriz.

As for Ibn Hajar Asqalani's saying that Ja'far was Saduq Yahim, then this grading was challenged by two contemporaries who reviewed Ibn Hajar's *al-Taqrib*, and they are Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and Dr Bashhar Awwad Ma'ruf. In their *Tahrir Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (1/22-221, no. 960) they declared Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira to be Thiqa (trustworthy) and this is an indication that the claim of Ibn Manda is of little substance and has no precedent. Note also that al-Hafiz Shamsud-Din al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) has declared Ja'far to be Saduq (truthful) in his Ta'rikh al-Islam (8/63. Tadmuri edn)

Indeed, it has been seen already that Imam Ibn Hanbal, who was a far greater Muhaddith and earlier authority who lived closer to the time of Ja'far than the likes of Ibn Manda, Ibn Shahin and Ibn Hibban had also declared Ja'far to be trustworthy. Besides this point, Ibn Manda's discreditation is not of a type

which explains more specifically (Jarh Mufassar) the alleged weakness in Ja'far. This type of Jarh is known as Jarh mubham (vague criticism) and it is not acceptable on its own.

Additionally, since al-Bukhari reported the Ta'wil of al-Kursi to be al-Ilm from Ibn Jubayr, it is also safe to assume that al-Bukhari had no problem with accepting the authenticity of Ibn Jubayr's narration since he incorporated it in his Sahih; and since this narration is known to emanate via the route of Ja'far from Ibn Jubayr, there is also indication that al-Bukhari may have considered Ja'far to be a truthful (saduq) if not a trustworthy (thiqa) narrator.

Indeed, Imam al-Bukhari mentioned Ja'far in his Ta'rikh al-Kabir (vol. 2) as follows:

[2190] جعفر بن أبي المغيرة الخزاعي عن سعيد بن جبير روى عنه مطرف وأشعث القمي ويعقوب القمي

Al-Bukhari did not make any Jarh (disparagement) or explicit Ta'dil (accreditation) on Ja'far and some Ulama hold this to be an indication that al-Bukhari's silence on a narrator in his *Ta'rikh al-Kabir* is an indication that such a narrator is trustworthy with him.

Indeed, al-Hafiz al-Mizzi (d. 742 AH) mentioned the following in his *Tahdhib al-Kamal* (18/265, Awwad edn) from **al-Hafiz Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Ahmed ibn Sa'eed ibn Yarbu al-Ishbili** (b. 444 AH - d. 522 AH)[1] who quoted

[1] See his biography in al-Sila (1/283) of ibn Bushkuwal

from the Ta'rikh of al-Bukhari that he had in his possession:

قال الحافظ أبو محمد عبدالله بن أحمد بن سعيد بن يربوع الاشبيلي: بين مسلم جرحه في صدر كتابه، وأما البخاري، فلم ينبه من أمره على شئ فدل أنه عنده على الاحتمال، لانه قد قال في " التاريخ ": كل من لم أبين فيه جرحة فهو على الاحتمال، وإذا قلت: فيه نظر، فلا يحتمل.

If the above quote from al-Ishbili is sound then this shows that generally if al-Bukhari remained silent on a narrator by not making any form of Jarh (disparagement), then his narrations are carried forward and tawthiq is admissible.

One of the writers from the same school of doctrine as al-Jasim, known as Hamad al-Othman actually mentioned this point in his, *A Study of ibn Hajar al Asqalani and his work al-Nukat ala Kitab ibn al-Salah* (p. 22) when he said:

"It should be noted that the Ta'rikh is generally devoid of clear rulings in favour of, or against the narrators. Some authorities have commented on this silence on the part of al-Bukhari, e.g. **al-Hafiz al-Iraqi** says, when speaking about one of the narrators, 'Abdal Karim ibn Abi'l Makhariq, **'As for al-Bukhari, he did not indicate anything about his status, which shows that there remains some possibility of acceptability**, since he says in his Ta'rikh, ***<<For everyone against whom I do not mention clear words, there remains some possibility of his being acceptable, but if I say, 'There is doubt about him', then there remains no possibility.>>'"***

Al-Othman acquired the last quote from *al-Bayan wal Tawdih* (p. 144) of al-Hafiz Abu Zur'a al-Iraqi (d. 826 AH). Here is a scan of what al-Iraqi actually said:

على أنه لم يخرج عنه إلا الثابت من غير طريقه ، وما علمت من مشى حاله بوجه ، لكن قال الحافظ أبو محمد عبد الله بن أحمد الأصيلي بيّن مسلم جرحه في صدر كتابه . وأما البخاري فلم ينبّه من أمره على شيء يدل على أنه عنده على الاحتمال لأنه قد قال في التاريخ : كل من لم أبين فيه جرحاً فهو على الاحتمال ، وإذا قلت : فيه نظر فلا يحتمل .
وقال الذهبي : أخرج له البخاري تعليقاً ، ومسلم متابعة ، وهذا يدل على أنه ليس بمطرح .

Thus, since al-Bukhari did not weaken Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira in his *Ta'rikh al-Kabir* or any other work, then this is an indication of his tawthiq of Ja'far and his narration from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr.

Indeed, the alternative version from Ibn Abbas mentioning that al-Kursi is the "place of the two feet" was reported via Sa'eed ibn Jubayr's student known as Muslim ibn al-Bateen, whose full name was Muslim ibn Abi Imran. Muslim is Thiqa (trustworthy) as others have noted, and a short note on him was mentioned in al-Bukhari's *Ta'rikh al-Kabir* (vol. 7) as follows:

[1135] مسلم بن أبي عمران أبو عبد الله البطين وهو الكوفي عن سعيد بن جبير وأبي العبيدين روى عنه سلمة بن كهيل والأعمش قال علي نا سفيان عن عمار الدهني عن مسلم بن أبي عمران البطين سمع عمرو بن ميمون

Al-Bukhari mentioned no Jarh or Ta'dil on Muslim and this is an indication that he must have been Thiqa with al-Bukhari since Muslim's narrations are also found in Sahih al-Bukhari (no. 926 and no. 1852) in at least 2 places.

Note also that Imam Abu Abdullah al-Hakim (d. 405 AH) has narrated via the route of Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira from Ibn Jubayr in his Mustadrak (2/565, edited by Mustafa Abdal Qadir Ata, or 2/520, Hyderabad edition) and he also declared the isnâd to be Sahih, with Hafiz al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) agreeing with al-Hakim in his Talkhis al-Mustadrak (2/520) by saying that the narration is Sahih. This is an indication that al-Hakim considered Ja'far to be a truthful or trustworthy narrator.

Another compiler of Hadith who produced a work on similar lines to al-Hakim's Mustadrak, was the Hanbali Muhaddith known as Diya al-Maqdisi (d. 643 AH). In his al-Mukhtara, Diya al-Maqdisi has narrated via Ja'far from Ibn Jubayr on more than a dozen occasions. This also indicates that Diya al-Maqdisi held Ja'far to be truthful or trustworthy in Hadith.

An additional example from al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar authenticating a chain of transmission (Sahih sanad) via the route of Ja'far from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr is found in his *Fath al-Bari* (10/253, Dar al-Ma'rifa edn) as follows based on a report from the Tafsir of al-Tabari (d. 310 AH):

وكأنه أشار إلى سبب نزول الآية وقد أخرجه الطبري من طريق جعفر بن أبي المغيرة عن سعيد بن جبير عن بن عباس قال كانت قريش تطوف بالبيت عراة يصفرون ويصفقون فأنزل الله تعالى قل من حرم زينة الله الآية وسنده صحيح وأخرج الطبري وبن أبي حاتم بأسانيد جياد عن أصحاب بن عباس كمجاهد وعطاء وغيرهما نحوه

All this proves the claim that there is no problem with Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira and the claims of Faisal al-Jasim have no weight, especially since it is apparent that Ja'far's narration on al-Kursi meaning Ilm from Ibn Jubayr is found in Sahih al-Bukhari (in ta'liq form), while tawthiq on Ja'far was seen from Ibn Ma'een, Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Shahin and Ibn Hibban, with his narrations being included by al-Hakim (along with al-Dhahabi's agreement with al-Hakim in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*) in his *Mustadrak*, Diya al-Maqdisi in his *al-Mukhtara* and al-Dhahabi in his *Ta'rikh al Islam*. Additionally, Ibn Hajar himself declared the narration from the Tafsir of Sufyan al-Thawri to be Sahih in its sanad.

Al Jasim said:

On p. 94:

Secondly: Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah differed from those who are more credible than him in regards to reporting from Sa'eed bin Jubayr. For Muslim al-Butayn reported from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas *(radi Allahu 'anhu)* that he said: *"His Kursi is the place of His Feet and the 'Arsh does not hold Him."*[1] Muslim bin al-Butayn is of the most trustworthy people to report from Sa'eed bin Jubayr and Bukhari and Muslim reported from him. Ibn Mandah said about Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah: "Ja'far did not follow him up and is not strong in transmitting from Sa'eed bin Jubayr."[2]

Thirdly: The Muhadditheen and Imams have authenticated the narrations about Two Feet and have weakened the narration of Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah which mentions "His Knowledge".

Abu Zur'ah authenticated such reports and said in what Ibn Mandah relayed from him in *at-*

Tawheed that he said: "Abu Zur'ah was asked about the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbas that it (the Kursi) is the place of the Two Feet and said that it is Saheeh."3 Ad-Daraqutni relays in *as-Sifat* with his chain of transmission from al-'Abbas bin Muhammad ad-Duri who said: I heard Yahya bin Ma'een say: "I witnessed Zakariya bin 'Adiyy ask Waki and he replied: 'O Aba Sufyan these *ahadeeth* mean that the Kursi is the place of the Two Feet...'". Waki' said: "We came across

Continued onto p. 95:

Isma'eel bin Abi Khalid, Sufyan and Mas'ar and all of them narrated these *ahadeeth* and did not interpret them."1 ad-Darimi said in *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesi*:

So it is to be said to this al-Mareesi2: 'As for what has been relayed from Ibn 'Abbas then that has been reported from Ja'far al-Ahmar and he is not to be depended upon in his narration as he relayed contrary to the narrations of the certified *thiqat*.' Muslim al-Butayn reported from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas about the Kursi that which contrary to what (Ja'far) relayed from Ibn 'Abbas...3

Reply:

What is evident is that there are two sets of narration going back to Ibn Abbas (ra) via the link of Sa'eed ibn Jubayr. One set is from Ibn Jubayr's student known as Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira who transmitted the Ta'wil of al-Kursi to mean al-Ilm, while the other set emanates from Muslim al-Bateen (not al-Butayn as al-Ashanti claimed) who is also a student of Sa'eed ibn Jubayr's. It has already been demonstrated that Ja'far's narration from Ibn Jubayr was included in Sahih al-Bukhari in mu'allaq form and explicitly authenticated by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in his *Fath al-Bari*.

Ibn Manda's saying holds no weight, especially since he did not explain his Jarh nor have any clear precedent as was mentioned above. As for the variants which mention the Kursi to be "The place of His two feet", even if they are accepted to be Sahih as some have mentioned, then the way to reconcile both sets of narrations is to make Tafweed[2] of this set,[3] and if one wishes to quote a Ta'wil, then one may quote the version that is in Sahih al-Bukhari and elsewhere from Ibn Jubayr (ra) and Ibn Abbas (ra).

Most of the variants from Ibn Abbas (ra) saying that al-Kursi is "The place of the two feet" come via routes having Imam Sufyan al-Thawri in their chains of

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[2] Tafweed here means to consign the 'howness' (kayfiyya) and meaning (ma'na) of an attribute of Allah to the Almighty creator himself. This was the way of the pious predecessors (Salafus–Salihin). See the following work for many quotes and proofs:

http://archive.org/details/QawlAlTamamBiIthbatiTafweedMadhhabanLilSalafAlKiram

Two examples from **Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) on Tafweed al-Ma'na:**

He mentioned in his *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala* (8/105):

فَقَولُنَا فِي ذَلِكَ وَبَابِهِ: الإِقرَارُ، وَالإِمْرَارُ وَتَفْوِيضُ مَعْنَاهُ إِلَى قَائِلِه الصَّادِقِ المَعْصُومِ

Meaning:

"Our saying in this and what falls under it is: Submission to the text, passing it on as it came and consigning the knowledge of its meaning (tafwidh ma'nahu) to its Sacrosanct and Truthful Sayer.

He also said in his Siyar a'lam an-Nubala (14/376):

وَأَمَّا السَّلَفُ، فَمَا خَاضُوا فِي التَّأْوِيْلِ، بَلْ آمَنُوا وَكَفُّوا، وَفَوَّضُوا عِلمَ ذَلِكَ إِلَى اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِه

Meaning: "As for the Salaf (three earliest Muslim generations), then they did not delve into interpretation (of the Attributes), but rather they believed, refrained, and consigned the knowledge of that to Allah and His Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)."

[3] See also *Aqawil al-Thiqat* of Shaykh Mari'i al-Karmi al-Hanbali, p. 117-118

transmission. It is worth considering that despite Imam Sufyan al-Thawri transmitting this version, he did not incorporate it in his Tafsir, on the contrary, the reader may have realized by now that he recorded the Ta'wil of al-Kursi to mean Allah's Ilm alone as reported from Ibn Jubayr, and this specific narration was declared to have a Sahih chain of transmission as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani mentioned in his *Fath al-Bari*.

Hence, this is a strong indication that despite knowing of "The place of the two feet" version, Sufyan al-Thawri considered it sufficient to explain the verse from Sura al-Baqara (255) with the explanation of Ibn Jubayr. This Ta'wil from Ibn Jubayr was no doubt taken from his Shaykh, the Sahabi, Abdullah ibn Abbas (ra).

As for al-Jasim's claim: The Muhadditheen and Imams have authenticated the narrations about Two Feet and have weakened the narration of Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah which mentions "His Knowledge".

One can see the futility in his claim as it has already been shown that al-Bukhari accepted the Ta'wil of al-Kursi from Ibn Jubayr, as did Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in his *Fath al-Bari* when authenticating the narration from the *Tafsir* of al-Thawri.

As for al-Jasim's point: Abu Zur'ah authenticated such reports and said in what Ibn Mandah relayed from him in *at-Tawheed* that he said: "Abu Zur'ah was asked about the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbas that it (the Kursi) is the place of the Two Feet and said that it is Saheeh."3

He gave the reference in footnote no. 3 as:

Ibn Mandah, *at-Tawheed*, vol.3, p.309

Having looked at this narration in *Kitab al-Tawhid* of Ibn Manda, the sanad back to Abu Zur'a that was mentioned was via the route of Ibn Manda from his Shaykh – Muhammad ibn Abi Amr al-Bukhari who related from Muhammad ibn al Mundhir ibn Sa'eed al-Marwazi (who took from Abu Zur'a). I did not find any sufficient biography for these two narrators, and more so, no specific Jarh or Ta'dil. It may be that they are both majhûl (unknown) as Hadith narrators. Wallahu a'lam.

As for al-Jasim's point: ad-Darimi said in *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesi*:

So it is to be said to this al-Mareesi[2]: 'As for what has been relayed from Ibn 'Abbas then that has been reported from Ja'far al-Ahmar and he is not to be depended upon in his narration as he relayed contrary to the narrations of the certified *thiqat*.' Muslim al-Butayn reported from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas about the Kursi that which contrary to what (Ja'far) relayed from Ibn 'Abbas...[3]

Uthman al-Darimi mentioned the name of Ja'far al-Ahmar and if it is said that this is the same Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira, then one wonders what the evidential proof for this is? It has already been mentioned from Ibn Hajar's *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* that the Ja'far who narrated from Ibn Jubayr is Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira al-Khuza'ie al-Qummi:

جعفر بن أبي المغيرة الخزاعي القمي

As for Ja'far al-Ahmar then he appears to be the narrator known as Ja'far ibn Ziyad al-Ahmar. Ibn Hajar mentioned the following in his *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (vol. 2) on al-Ahmar:

[142] ل ت س لأبي داود في المسائل والترمذي والنسائي **جعفر بن زياد الأحمر** أبو عبد الله ويقال أبو عبد الرحمن روى عن عبد الله بن عطاء والأعمش ومغيرة بن مقسم ويزيد بن أبي زياد وإسماعيل بن أبي خالد ويحيى بن سعيد الأنصاري وعطاء بن السائب وخلق وعنه بن إسحاق وابن عيينة وشاذان وأبو غسان وموسى بن داود ووكيع وإسحاق بن منصور السلولي وعبد الرحمن بن مهدي وعدة قال أحمد صالح الحديث وقال جماعة عن بن معين ثقة وقال عثمان الدارمي سئل يحيى عنه فقال بيده لم يثبته ولم يضعفه فقال محمد بن عثمان بن أبي شيبة عن يحيى كان من الشيعة وقال بن عمار ليس عندهم بحجة كان رجلا صالحا كوفيا يتشيع وقال الجوزجاني مائل عن الطريق وقال يعقوب بن سفيان ثقة وقال أبو زرعة صدوق وقال أبو داود صدوق شيعي حدث عنه بن مهدي وقال النسائي ليس به بأس وقال حسين بن علي بن جعفر الأحمر كان جدي من رؤساء الشيعة وقال مطين وغيره مات سنة 167 قلت وقال يعقوب الفسوي كوفي ثقة وقال بن عدي هو صالح شيعي وقال الأزدي مائل عن القصد فيه تحامل وشيعية غالية وحديثه مستقيم وقال الخطيب قول الجوزجاني فيه مائل عن الطريق يعني في مذهبه وما نسب إليه من التشيع وقال عثمان بن أبي شيبة صدوق ثقة وقال العجلي كوفي ثقة وقال بن حبان في الضعفاء كثير الرواية عن الضعفاء وإذا روى عن الثقات تفرد عنهم بأشياء في القلب منها شيء وقال الدارقطني يعتبر به وقال العقيلي يقال هو الذي حمل الحسن بن صالح على ترك صلاة الجمعة قال له الحسن أصلي معهم ثم اعيدها فقال له يراك إنسان فيقتدي بك

Ja'far al-Ahmar did not narrate from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr and he was declared to be Saduq (truthful) but having Shi'i leanings in Ibn Hajar's *Taqrib al-Tahdhib*:

[940] جعفر بن زياد الأحمر الكوفي صدوق يتشيع من السابعة مات سنة سبع وستين ل ت س

Hence, what Uthman al-Darimi referred to is with reference to Ja'far al-Ahmar who is a different narrator to Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira. The same reply also applies to what al-Jasim quoted from al-Dhahabi when he said (p. 95):

Adh-Dhahabi said in *al-'Uluww:*

Ibn 'Abbas said: "His Kursi, means His Knowledge" and this narration has arrived via the route of Ja'far al-Ahmar who is weak (leen) and Ibn al-Anbari said "he only relays this chain of transmission which is criticised."5

Here, al-Dhahabi said that Ja'far al-Ahmar is weak (leen) while in his *al-Kashif* (no. 790) he declared him to be a Saduq (truthful) Shi'ite. *Kitab al-Uluw* was one of al-Dhahabi's earlier works.

It may be that al-Darimi knew of a variant from Ja'far al-Ahmar going back to Ibn Abbas saying that al-Kursi means al-Ilm, and if that is the case, it is not correct that al-Ahmar is an outright weak narrator, but as al-Dhahabi himself said with the later testimony of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, al-Ahmar is Saduq despite his Shi'ite leanings.

As for al-Jasim's quote from Abu Mansur al-Azhari (d. 370 AH) discrediting the ta'wil of Kursi to be al-Ilm as reported from Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Abbas from his *Tahdhib al-Lugha* (10/54):

The people of knowledge have agreed on the authenticity of this narration and as for that which has also been transmitted from Ibn 'Abbas that he said the Kursi means "His Knowledge" then this has not been confirmed by the people with knowledge of the narrations and reports.

Al-Azhari was not from the Salafus-Salihin, and what is apparent from the findings mentioned above is that the Ta'wil of al-Kursi as al-Ilm was mentioned from the Salaf - like Ibn Jubayr as mentioned by al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH) in his Sahih, also by Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH) in his Tafsir. Note again, al-Thawri did not incorporate, "The place of the two feet" variants in his Tafsir, and al-Tabari (d. 310 AH) appears to have preferred the meaning of al-Kursi to be Ilm in his Tafsir. Hence, there is little value in quoting al-Azhari.

Imam Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi (d. 327 AH) mentioned the two variants from Ibn Abbas (ra) in his Tafsir, and he did not reject the variant regarding al-Kursi being al-Ilm from Ibn Abbas (ar) and his disciple, Ibn Jubayr. He said that al-Kursi meaning "His Knowledge" was: *"One of the sayings of Ibn Abbas.":-*

2643- حَدَّثَنَــا أَبُو سَعِيدٍ الأَشَجُّ، ثنا ابْنُ إِدْرِيسَ، عَنْ مُطَرِّفِ بْنِ طَرِيفٍ، عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ أَبِي الْمُغِيرَةِ، عَنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ،"قَوْلُهُ: ﴿وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ﴾ , قال: عِلْمُهُ".

وَرُوِيَ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، نحو ذلك. وَالْوَجْهُ الثَّانِي: وَهُوَ أَحَدُ أَقْوَالِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ

This seems to indicate that Ibn Abi Hatim accepted the authenticity of this report. Wallahu a'lam.

From those who came after al-Salaf, the famous grammarian known as Imam **Raghib al-Isfahani** (circa. 5th century) in his well known *Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'an* (p. 706) mentioned under al-Kursi that it has been related from Ibn Abbas (ra) that it means al-Ilm as follows:

وقوله : وسع كرسيه السماوات والأرض فقد روي عن ابن عباس أن الكرسي العلم ، وقيل كرسيه ملكه

Raghib al-Isfahani did not mention the "The place of the two feet" version.

Imam Abul Qasim al-Lalika'i (d. 418 AH) mentioned the report from Ibn Abbas (ra) that al-Kursi is al-Ilm in his *Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahlus Sunna wal Jama'a* (3/449, no. 679):

أخبرنا علي بن عمر بن ابراهيم قال ثنا أحمد بن محمد
الجوزي قال ثنا الحسين بن مكرم قال ثنا يحي بن حماد قال ثنا أبو عوانة عن مطرف عن جعفر
بن أبي المغيرة عن سعيد بن جبير عن أبي عباس قال وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض قال علمه

Despite knowing of the alternate version mentioning "The place of the two feet" in his *Sharh* (no. 928) when quoting Abu Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam's verdict on such narrations, al-Lalika'i did not negate the above narration saying that al-Kursi is -"His Ilm", nor did he attempt to discredit such a report like Uthman al-Darimi did. Al-Lalika'i does not seem to have mentioned with any sanad the report for "The place of the two feet" in his *Sharh*.

Note also, that the editor of al-Lalikai's work, Ahmed ibn Sa'd al-Ghamidi also mentioned (fn. 3, 3/449) that the Ulama differed on which set of narrations should be given preference to, and he admitted that al-Tabari preferred the meaning of al-Kursi to be al-Ilm. The question that remains is that will the likes of Faisal al-Jasim who thought himself to be in line with al-Tabari claim that al-Tabari was incorrect, or will they say the same for al-Bukhari and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani?!

One may also wish to note that the work known as *Kitab al-Sunna* attributed to Imam Abdullah ibn Ahmed ibn Hanbal has also mentioned the narration from Ibn Abbas (ra) saying that the meaning of the verse on al-Kursi is al-Ilm. This is mentioned as follows in *Kitab al-Sunna* (2/500-501, no. 1156) with a break in the chain (munqati) between Ya'qub al-Qummi and Sa'eed ibn Jubayr:

حدثني عبد الأعلى بن حماد النرسي نا يعقوب بن عبد الله يعني القمي

عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس في قوله وسع كرسيه السماوات والأرض قال علمه وسع السماوات والأرض

No comments were mentioned by the compiler of *Kitab al-Sunna* to dismiss this interpretation, despite the editor (Muhammad Sa'eed al-Qahtani) rejecting it based on Abu Mansur al-Azhari's saying. The *Kitab al-Sunna* also mentioned another similar narration ascribed to the Sahabi, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra), which was also mentioned by al-Jasim. This latter narration will be analysed below.

In the *Tafsir* (1/118) of **Imam Abul Hasan al-Mawardi** (d. 450 AH) he mentioned the differences of opinion on what the Kursi is:

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ

في الكرسي قولان

أحدهما : أنه من صفات الله تعالى

والثاني : أنه من أوصاف ملكوته

فإذا قيل إنه من صفات ففيه أربعة أقاويل

أحدها : أنه علم الله ، قاله ابن عباس

والثاني : أنه قدرة الله

والثالث : ملك الله

والرابع : تدبير الله

وإذا قيل إنه من أوصاف ملكوته ففيه ثلاثة أقاويل

أحدها : أنه العرش ، قاله الحسن

والثاني : أنه سرير دون العرش

والثالث : هو كرسي تحت العرش ، والعرش فوق الماء . وأصل الكرسي العلم

Amongst the above points, al-Mawardi mentioned that Ibn Abbas (ra) held al-Kursi to mean the Knowledge of Allah, and al-Mawardi said that the Asl (origin) of al-Kursi is Ilm, as al-Tabari was quoted saying similarly before.

Similar quotes affirming the strong view that al-Kursi means al-Ilm from the early Salaf can be seen in other well known works on Qur'anic exegesis.

An Example from Nasir al-Albani authenticating a narration via the route of Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr:

In his editing of *Jami al-Tirmidhi* (no. 2980) he declared the following narration to be Hasan (good):

[2980] حدثنا عبد بن حميد حدثنا الحسن بن موسى حدثنا يعقوب بن عبد الله الأشعري عن جعفر بن أبي المغيرة عن سعيد بن جبير عن بن عباس قال جاء عمر إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال يا رسول الله هلكت قال وما أهلكك قال حولت رحلي الليلة قال فلم يرد عليه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم شيئا قال فأوحي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هذه الآية { نساؤكم حرث لكم فأتوا حرثكم أنى شئتم } أقبل وأدبر وأتق الدبر والحيضة قال أبو عيسى هذا حديث حسن غريب ويعقوب بن عبد الله الأشعري هو يعقوب القمي

Al-Albani cross referenced the narration also to his work known as *Adab al-Zifaf* where on this occasion he declared the chain of transmission (sanad) to be Hasan:

[31]

الثاني: عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال:

((جاء عمر بن الخطاب إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: يا رسول الله! هلكت. قال: وما الذي أهلكك؟ قال: حولت رحلي الليلة، فلم يرد عليه شيئاً، فأوحي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هذه الآية: ﴿نساؤكم حرثٌ لكم فأتوا حرثكم أنّى شئتم﴾، يقول: أقبِلْ وأدبِرْ، واتقل الدبر والحيضة))النسائي والترمذي والطبراني والواحدي بسند حسن.وحسنه الترمذي.

The same narration is also found via the route of Ja'far from Ibn Jubayr from Ibn Abbas in the *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban. Once again, al-Albani in his notes to *Sahih ibn Hibban* printed under the title, *al-Ta'liqat al-Hissan ala Sahih ibn Hibban* (6/275, no. 4190) declared the narration to be Hasan, and Shaykh Shu'ayb al-

Arna'ut in his editing of *Sahih Ibn Hibban* (9/516, no. 4202) also declared the isnâd for this same narration to be Hasan.

This example serves to show that al-Albani did not reject all narrations via the route of Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira from Ibn Jubayr.

A narration ascribed to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra):

Another narration on the "Placing of the two feet" was mentioned by al-Jasim (p. 96):

From Abu Musa *(radi Allahu 'anhu)* that he said: *"the Kursi is the place of the Two Feet..."4*

Al-Jasim mentioned in the footnote the following references for this narration:

Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-'Arsh, p.77; 'Abdullah bin Imam Ahmad, as-Sunnah, vol.1, p.302; Ibn Jareer, vol.3, p.9; Abu'sh-Shaykh, al-'Udhmah, vol.2, p. 627; Ibn Mandah, ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah, p.46; al-Bayhaqi, al-Asma' wa's-Sifat, p.509; adh-Dhahabi, al-'Uluww, p.107. Al-**Albani** authenticated the hadeeth in Mukhtasar ul-'Uluww.

Al-Jasim thought it to be authentic inline with the late Nasir al-Albani's declaration that it had an authentic chain of transmission halting as a saying of Abu Musa (radiallahu anhu). This was noticed in al-Albani's editing of the abridged (Mukhtasar) edition of al-Dhahabi's early work known as *Kitab al-Uluw* (pp. 123-124, fn. 75).

What al-Albani and his presumptive followers like al-Jasim and al-Ashanti failed to mention was that there appears to be a break in the chain between Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) and Umara bin Umayr (al-Taymi).

Here follows the wording in Arabic as mentioned in Imam al-Bayhaqi's *Kitab al-Asma wal Sifat* (2/296, Hashidi edn):

859– أخبرنا أبو عبد الله الحافظ ، حَدَّثَنَا أبو العباس هو الأصم ، حَدَّثَنَا محمد بن إسحاق ، حدثنا هارون بن عبد الله ، حَدَّثَنَا عبد الصمد بن عبد الوارث ، قال : سمعت أبي قال : حَدَّثَنَا ابن جحادة ، عن سلمة بن كهيل ، عن عمارة بن عمير ، عن أبي موسى ، رضي الله عنه

قال : الكرسي موضع القدمين وله أطيط كأطيط الرحل . قد روينا في هذا أيضا عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما ، وذكرنا أن معناه فيما نرى أنه موضوع من العرش موضع القدمين من السرير ، وليس فيه إثبات المكان لله سبحان

One of the later printed editions of this work by Imam al-Bayhaqi is by Abdullah al-Hashidi, who is from the same doctrinal school as al-Jasim and al-Albani. He declared the chain of transmission to be **da'eef (weak)** and mentioned the break in the chain between Umara and Abu Musa (ra). There appears to be no definitive proof that Umara heard from Abu Musa (ra), and if one looks at the *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* of al-Hafiz ibn Hajar (under the note on Umara ibn Umayr) there was no mention of the hearing of Umara from Abu Musa (ra). Rather, Ibn Hajar and before him, al-Mizzi, in his *Tahdhib al-Kamal* (21/256) mentioned that Umara heard from Abu Musa's (ra) son, Ibrahim, besides others.

Likewise, Muhammad al-Qahtani, the editor of *Kitab al-Sunna* (1/302, no. 588), who is also from the same doctrinal school as al-Jasim declared the chain of transmission to have a break between Umara and Abu Musa. What is surprising to note is that al-Jasim gave a precise reference to this edition of *Kitab al-Sunna* but he did not mention that al-Qahtani had mentioned this break in the chain! The same narration ascribed back to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) with the same break in the chain is found in another place of *Kitab al-Sunna* (2/454, no. 1022) where al-Qahtani also mentioned this defect.

Indeed, al-Albani himself alluded to the point that Umara did not hear from Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) in his *Silsila al-Da'eefa* (2/306-307, no. 907) but Umara took from the medium of Ibrahim ibn Abi Musa al-Ash'ari.

Note also, al-Albani in his editing of *Mukhtasar al-Uluw* (p. 124) attempted to discredit a claim made by Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari in his edition of al-Bayhaqi's *Kitab al-Asma wal Sifat* (p. 404) with regard to Umara ibn Umayr. Al-Albani mentioned that al-Kawthari had claimed that Umara was listed in al-Bukhari's book of weak narrators (Kitab al-Du'afa); hence this was an alleged mistake on al-Kawthari's part since Umara is no doubt a trustworthy and established narrator whose narrations are found in the Sahihayn. Additionally, al-Albani mentioned that Umara is not listed in the *Kitab al-Du'afa* of al-Bukhari, but Umara ibn Juwayn is.

This argument propounded by al-Albani would have made sense if there was only one narrator known as Umara ibn Umayr! On the contrary, there are actually two narrators with this name. Indeed, the Umara that al-Kawthari had thought to be in the above sanad in al-Bayhaqi's *al-Asma wal Sifat* is a lesser

known narrator who was mentioned by Hafiz al-Dhahabi in his *Mizan al-I'tidal* as follows:

6029 – عمارة بن عمير . عن أم الطفيل بحديث الرؤية . لا يعرف . ذكره البخاري في الضعفاء

It is true that there is no Umara ibn Umayr listed in the printed editions of al-Bukhari's *al-Du'afa*, but what is apparent is that in the days of al-Dhahabi and Ibn Hajar after him (see his *Lisan al-Mizan* under Umara ibn Umayr) their manuscripts of *al-Du'afa* did mention this lesser known Umara.

To conclude:

The Kursi is established from the Holy Qur'an and some ahadith; there is no room to deny it, and Imam al-Tahawi affirmed the Kursi in his famous treatise on Aqida. As for the claim that none from the Salaf made Ta'wil of al-Kursi, then this is not the case, since Imam al-Bukhari incorporated the Ta'wil of al-Kursi from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr in his *Sahih*. This narration was incorporated in the *Tafsir* of Imam Sufyan al-Thawri in exclusive explanation of the verse mentioning the Kursi (Sura al-Baqara: 255), and accepted to be a valid view by Imam al-Tabari in his *Tafsir*.

Even the works that the claimants to the Salaf in this day and age claim to admire and quote from like: *Kitab al-Sunna* attributed to Abdullah ibn Ahmed, *Tafsir ibn Abi Hatim* and *Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahlis Sunna* by al-Lalika'i all mentioned the Ta'wil of al-Kursi, without denying its possibility as a valid interpretation, nor weakening the narrations they recorded on the Ta'wil outright. There is no firm evidence to say the narrations via Ja'far ibn Abi'l Mughira from Ibn Jubayr

are Shadh (at odds) with the alternate versions as al-Jasim thought. Rather, both sets of narrations can be harmonized. Please see the appendix at the end for a summarized note on the two sets of narrations discussed above as mentioned in the work known as *The Refutation of Him [Ibn Taymiyya] Who Attributes Direction To Allah (al-Raddu ala man Qala bil-Jiha)* by Imam ibn Jahbal al-Kilabi (d. 733 AH), with translation and notes by Dr. GF Haddad of Lebanon.

Peace and Blessings on the Prophet Muhammad, his Family, and all his Companions.

Abul Hasan Hussain Ahmed
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Allāh Most High said, {*His seat of authority* (*kursī*) *includes the heavens and the earth*} (2:255). Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ said, "That is, His knowledge," as in the abridgment of Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr*.[183]

[183] Narrated *marfūʿ* from the Prophet ﷺ by Sufyān al-Thawrī with a sound chain according to Ibn Ḥajar in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (1959 ed. 8:199) and al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Sunna*; and *mawqūf* from Ibn ʿAbbās by al-Ṭabarī with three sound chains in his *Tafsīr* (3:9-11), al-Māwardī in his *Tafsīr* (1:908), al-Suyūṭī in *al-Durr al-Manthūr* (1:327), al-Shawkānī in *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* (1:245), and others. Also narrated in "suspended" form (*muʿallaq*) by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Saʿīd ibn Jubayr (Book of *Tafsīr*, chapter on the saying of Allāh ﷻ: {*And if you go in fear, then* (*pray*) *standing or on horseback*} (2:239). Its chains are documented by Ibn Ḥajar in *Taghlīq al-Taʿlīq* (2/4:185-186) where he shows that Sufyān al-Thawrī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, and Wakīʿ narrated it *marfūʿ* from the Prophet ﷺ, although in the *Fatḥ* he declares the *mawqūf* version from Ibn ʿAbbās more likely. Al-Ṭabarī chooses it as the most correct explanation: "The external wording of the Qur'ān indicates the correctness of the report from Ibn ʿAbbās that it [the *kursī*] is His ʿ*ilm* [...] and the original sense of *al-kursī* is *al-ʿilm*." Another authentically related *mawqūf* report from Ibn ʿAbbās has, "The *kursī* is the footstool (*mawḍiʿ al-qadamayn*)." The difference between the two is that in the first report he explicitly attributes knowledge to Allāh ﷻ while in the second he does not attribute the feet nor the footstool to Him. The latter is narrated with a sound chain by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (12:39 §12404) as stated by al-Haythamī (6:323), al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā'* (2:196 §758), Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawḥīd* (p. 108), al-Ḥākim (2:282), who declared it *ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Khaṭīb in *Tārīkh Baghdād* (9:251), Ibn Abī Shayba in *al-ʿArsh* (p. 79 §61), Abū al-Shaykh in *al-ʿAẓama* (2:552-553 §196, 2:582 §216); and *marfūʿ* – erroneously – by al-Dāraquṭnī in *al-Ṣifāt* (p. 49-50 §36) and Ibn Mandah in *al-Radd ʿalā al-Jahmiyya* (p. 44-45). Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-ʿIlal* (1:22) declared that it should not be considered a *marfūʿ* Prophetic report, a verdict confirmed by al-Dhahabī in his *Mīzān* (2:265), Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* (1:317), and Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Tahdhīb* (4:274), cf. Aḥdab, *Zawā'id* (7:37-39 §1383). Al-Bayhaqī said: "He did not attribute the feet [to Allāh ﷻ], nor did Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī in his own identical statement [*Asmā'* (2:296-297 §859) with a weak chain], and this [non-attributive form] seems the soundest version. Its interpretation among the authorities is that the *kursī* in relation to the Throne is as the footstool is in relation to the couch under which a footstool is placed for the person reclining on it [...] At any rate, this is a halted report which is not narrated from the Prophet ﷺ. As for our early companions, they did not explain such cases nor did they preoccupy themselves with interpreting them, believing, at the same time, that Allāh ﷻ is One without parts or limbs." Al-Qurṭubī in his *Tafsīr* (3:278) cites a similar explanation from Ibn ʿAṭiyya. Elsewhere (2:272) al-Bayhaqī, like al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī before him, gives precedence to Ibn ʿAbbās's authentic explanation of the *kursī* as "His Knowledge." Ibn Kathīr states his preference for the narration of the footstool in the introduction of his *Bidāya* while al-Bayḍāwī (1:555) considers it "pure imagery" (*tamthīl mujarrad*) "and there is no seat and no one sitting in reality" (*wa-lā kursī fil-ḥaqīqa wa-lā qāʿid*). [T]